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**Soviet National Security Policy:
Responses to the Changing
Military and Economic
Environment**

88 JUN 1988

An Intelligence Assessment

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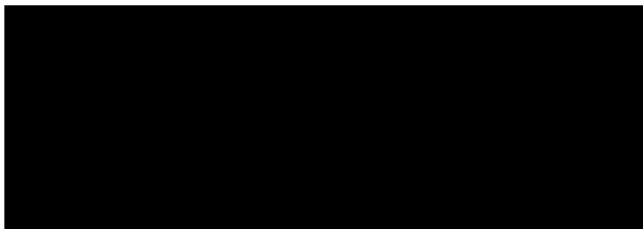
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Soviet National Security Policy: Responses to the Changing Military and Economic Environment

An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office
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**Soviet National Security Policy:
Responses to the Changing
Military and Economic
Environment**

Scope Note

This is the third in a series of papers produced in the Office of Soviet Analysis that seek to explore various aspects of the Gorbachev leadership's "new thinking." Each examines the historical roots and current imperatives that appear to have provided the driving force behind the leadership agenda and explores the potential implications for the USSR in the 1990s. The first, SOV 87-10036X, *Gorbachev: Steering the USSR Into the 1990s*, July 1987, focuses on Gorbachev's economic program. The second, SOV 87-10061X, *Gorbachev and the Military: Managing National Security Policy*, October 1987, examines the dynamics of party-military relations and the implications for policy formulation. This study deals with the evolving Soviet perception of the military environment and the debates under way in the USSR on security policy.

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**Soviet National Security Policy:
Responses to the Changing
Military and Economic
Environment**

Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 31 May 1988
was used in this report.*

The reality of the nuclear standoff and an era of tightening economic constraints have stimulated an expanding debate in the USSR on the precepts that guide decisions on the size and composition of Soviet military forces. Much of the public treatment is designed to influence Western opinion by portraying Soviet military aims as nonaggressive, seeking only what is necessary to ensure the security of the USSR. Nonetheless, there is, we believe, persuasive evidence from both classified and open sources that the discourse goes beyond mere propaganda and involves fundamental issues that have potentially important ramifications for Soviet security policy and military forces over the longer term.

One important factor contributing to this examination of security requirements has been the evolving views of Soviet military theoreticians on the implications of the current nuclear balance. Some, including former Chief of the General Staff Ogarkov, have argued in recent years that the size and diversity of the nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers have reached the point that neither could expect to deliver a first strike without receiving a devastating response that would render meaningless any practical concept of military victory. Ogarkov has further argued that the high likelihood that a limited nuclear war would escalate to a global nuclear exchange constitutes a deterrent to the introduction of nuclear weapons at any level.

Faced with a NATO avowal to employ nuclear weapons if necessary to prevent a victory by Warsaw Pact conventional forces, the Soviets in their military writings have continued to assert that any war between the Pact and NATO is likely ultimately to escalate to the use of nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, Soviet treatises on the subject in the last several years have given increasing weight to the possibility that a war between the two alliances might not only begin with conventional weapons, but would also be fought for a protracted period and perhaps reach resolution solely at the nonnuclear level.

Ogarkov has not proposed a slackening of the commitment to Soviet nuclear strength; indeed, he has asserted that continuing improvements are necessary to ensure the standoff is maintained. Rather, the implication of his argument is that, although nuclear superiority in a war-winning sense probably is not sustainable, even if achievable in the short term, maintaining this nuclear standoff is a sufficient objective for such efforts in the future. But the USSR's success in achieving the standoff, according to

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Ogarkov, means that substantially increased resources must be devoted to Soviet conventional war-fighting capabilities—particularly in the area of costly high-technology weapons. [REDACTED]

The political leadership, however, has been grappling since the late 1970s with the need to revitalize a flagging economy and modernize an antiquated industrial base. And in 1985 Gorbachev's program for industrial modernization through large increases in production of civilian machinery clearly signaled a more intense resource competition for a military that was already restive after a decade of relatively slow growth in defense spending. [REDACTED]

The new General Secretary quickly set out to reassert the party's authoritative role in defining security issues and doctrine, which had been permitted to wane under the Brezhnev leadership. And Gorbachev has sought to impose his own version of military security policy under the rubric of "reasonable sufficiency." This has now become the official term used by civilian and military commentators alike to characterize the aims of Soviet military policy, but the public and private debate reflects fundamental divergencies in what it is supposed to mean. [REDACTED]

Virtually all commentators have characterized reasonable sufficiency of strategic nuclear forces as the ability to deliver a devastating response to any attack that might be launched by the enemy. There are evident disagreements over how this formula translates into force requirements, with some writers suggesting "functional" parity while the military argues for a more traditional approximation of numerical parity. But there seems to be a consensus, whether based on conviction or on acceptance of political and economic priorities, that the nuclear standoff can be maintained at lower force levels. This has enabled the military, while guarding its equities (particularly on strategic defense), to support Gorbachev's strategic arms control policies. [REDACTED]

Civilian specialists from the major Soviet foreign policy research institutes, however, have sought to extend the sufficiency concept much further, arguing that securing the USSR from military attack on any level—conventional as well as nuclear—does not require matching or exceeding the quantity and quality of all aspects of the military forces of potential adversaries. They assert that past adherence to this practice has resulted in undue economic strain, that political factors play an increasingly important

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role in security calculations, and that security can therefore be maintained with a reduced volume of material and human resources for military forces. Some have even advocated forces equipped and structured purely for defensive operations. [REDACTED]

Soviet military officers, while embracing the lexicon of sufficiency, have given it a more restricted definition. Defense Minister Yazov and General Staff Chief Akhromeyev, for example, appear to have accepted that the political and economic realities leave little room for the kind of increased defense spending implied in Ogarkov's arguments. But they have taken particular exception to the implicit rationale for unilateral cutbacks contained in the arguments of the civilian specialists. They have defined sufficiency in terms of parity—which they presumably see as a "sure-safe" military calculation—and assert that "it is NATO and the West" that set the limits of sufficiency. They also have expressed skepticism about the concept of "defensive defense," pointing out that, while defense can prevent the defeat of the USSR, it cannot defeat the enemy. [REDACTED]

While civilian specialists from the institutes and the senior military officers have taken the lead in articulating the basic divergencies in views, there is evidence that these differences do not break down along purely civilian and military lines. In any event, the debate on reasonable sufficiency is really over "how much is enough"; it will not be resolved through theoretical doctrinal tenets but on the basis of the policy agenda and political power of the party leadership. [REDACTED]

Some reports claim that Gorbachev has reached an accommodation with the Soviet defense constituency to hold down growth in defense outlays in order to gain the breathing space necessary for progress in his industrial modernization goals—the success of which is seen by the military to be in its own best interests. Even if growth is constrained, the present high level of military spending ensures a continuing large input of new weapons that should keep the defense constituency mollified, as long as the military does not sense a serious deterioration of the Soviet side of the military balance. Because so much of the USSR's superpower status rests on military power, however, resistance to any efforts to slacken appreciably the defense effort will not be confined to the military. Indeed, what Soviet military writers tout as the Western thrust into high-technology military hardware will continue to be a basis for arguing to increase defense resources. All this

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suggests that we will see a prolongation of the trend of the past decade—continued high but flat or slowly growing defense spending. [REDACTED]

Nonetheless, the meager progress so far in the industrial modernization program, particularly in machinery output, which is the linchpin of the plan, creates powerful incentives for at least a short-term reduction in military procurement and construction, and perhaps even in the size of the active-duty forces. A leadership seeking ways to conserve resources going to the military would not be hard pressed to find elements of the massive Soviet military establishment that seem excessive in relation to "reasonable" security requirements, especially if more weight is given to political dimensions of security. Indeed, a case could be made—and is, in fact, implied in the arguments of some writers—that defense spending could be cut at the same time the effectiveness of the Soviet military is improved. All of this leads us to conclude that—barring a major change in the party leadership or in the external situation—there is a good chance that Gorbachev will, by the end of this decade, turn to unilateral defense cuts. [REDACTED]

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Soviet National Security Policy: Responses to the Changing Military and Economic Environment

Evolution of Soviet Views on War With NATO

Europe: The Focus of Soviet Strategy

Physical proximity, historical and cultural ties, and the concentration of capitalist economic and military power combine to focus Soviet attention on the European continent. The higher combat readiness and more complete and modern equipage of Soviet troops stationed in Eastern Europe and the western military districts of the USSR compared with theater forces in other parts of the Soviet Union clearly indicate Moscow's relative military threat assessments and priorities. This focus on Europe is also manifested in the emphasis Soviet military writers and the curriculums of higher officers' schools place on the conduct of war in Europe.

Although the Soviets acknowledge that war involving members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact may erupt in other parts of the world, their foremost concern is whether and how war may start in or spread to Europe. In the Soviet view, only a major European war or intercontinental nuclear war could threaten the survival of the "socialist homeland."

An important, and at times dominant, element of the Soviet military leadership has generally regarded nuclear weapons as an unwelcome and disadvantageous factor vitiating what otherwise might be a more effective Soviet military advantage in Europe. This point of view was eclipsed by the military doctrine and strategy imposed by Nikita Khrushchev in 1960, which maintained that a war with NATO would inevitably be a nuclear one, and which were the basis for an emphasis on tailoring forces and plans almost exclusively for a nuclear war. It reemerged in the mid-1960s, however, when Khrushchev was removed from office after having set in motion the nuclear buildup that, paradoxically, made conventional conflict a conceivable option again.

Much of the buildup in nuclear capabilities that has taken place since then—especially theater nuclear forces—can be interpreted as a Soviet effort to restore the primacy of the ground forces in the European theater by making nuclear war an untenable proposition. An observation attributed to the noted Soviet military strategist Marshal of Armored Troops Pavel A. Rotmistrov in the mid-1960s is revealing of the sentiments of many in the military leadership:

The Soviet Union is a continental power. It must maintain control of the European continent. Now the United States has a tremendous nuclear capability adequate to destroy much of the Soviet Union. The latter's is somewhat more modest, but still sufficient to damage the United States to a degree that one must take into consideration. As time passes, the threat to the United States grows greater and, eventually, deterrence will become as binding on it as on the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviets with a valid counterstrike capability will continue to maintain their ability to overrun Europe in 60 to 90 days either in a nuclear or nonnuclear situation and . . . Europe will remain hostage to the Soviet Army.

Emphasis on Nuclear Warfare

Khrushchev imposed his version of military doctrine emphasizing nuclear warfare with the support of a minority of the military leadership, after a heated debate among senior military officers in the classified press in the late 1950s. The majority of the professional military leadership, which had always been dominated by ground force officers, disliked the deemphasis of conventional ground, air, and naval forces—and consequent loss of budget share for these forces—and the imposition of the new Strategic Rocket Forces as

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the premier military service. Also, it was not accidental that Khrushchev's cutback of conventional forces and deferment of major modernization costs for those forces coincided neatly with his requirement for resources to support his drive to invigorate Soviet industry and agriculture.¹ [REDACTED]

By 1960, developments in Soviet forces, as well as information from open and classified writings, confirmed that the Soviet military were organizing and planning on the assumption that any war with NATO would be nuclear virtually from the outset. This showed up starkly in the ground forces. Most of the field artillery and much of the infantry were stripped out of the ground forces, which were now being organized around tanks, valued for their resistance to nuclear effects as well as for their mobility and shock effect. Nuclear-capable tactical rockets and guided missiles were introduced into ground units. The tactical air forces were cut in half, and the new aircraft developed for these forces were designed mainly for air defense and delivering nuclear weapons; they were notably lacking in capacity for substantial payloads of ordnance. [REDACTED]

The doctrine for land warfare, as laid out in the classified reporting provided by Penkovskiy, [REDACTED]

Service Regulations issued in 1963, called for attacking enemy forces, airfields, ports, and command centers in Europe with the full array of nuclear weapons. Enemy nuclear capabilities were the priority targets. Ground forces were then to advance at high speed (90 to 100 kilometers per day) to destroy surviving NATO forces. [REDACTED]

These doctrinal precepts were embedded in the 1961 CPSU program, which called for "defensive potential . . . that ensures the decisive defeat of any enemy and readiness to deal imperialist aggression a crushing defeat." This emphasis on fighting and prevailing over the West under any circumstances, nuclear or nonnuclear, continued to appear in most of the evidence up through the mid-1970s. [REDACTED]

¹ For a discussion of Khrushchev's impact on military doctrine and his efforts to shift resources away from defense to the economy, see DD/I Staff Study OCT 2010/63, Caesar XVIII [REDACTED] June 1963, *Khrushchev's Role in the Current Controversy Over Soviet Defense Policy*. [REDACTED]

Genesis of Preemption Strategy. At this stage, the Soviets saw their nuclear capability as vastly inferior to NATO's. Not only were NATO's weapons far more numerous and its delivery systems more capable, but the Soviets considered their own systems highly vulnerable to surprise attack. Their missile sites in the western USSR and their bomber bases were soft targets and, although they were already investing heavily in air defense, they anticipated major losses if NATO attacked first. This perception that NATO might be able to deprive them of a retaliatory capability, the quest to develop their own disarming first-strike capability, and the desire to limit the overall damage that NATO could inflict through a nuclear strike probably were the genesis of the preemption strategy. [REDACTED]

Advent of "Flexible Response." Even as Soviet military doctrine was becoming nuclear oriented, the growing Soviet nuclear capability, especially the deployment of ICBMs, was prompting questions both in the West and in the USSR about the continued validity of NATO's "massive retaliation" strategy. Was it reasonable to expect that the United States would automatically launch nuclear strikes against

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Soviet territory to end a European war when it would have to expect a nuclear response against its own homeland that, while still far short of matching the US strike, would probably wreak great damage and cause millions of casualties? And what about the even greater damage that Western Europe would suffer?

Spurred by increasing doubts about the credibility of massive retaliation and the shock of the 1961 Berlin crisis, American strategic thinking began to coalesce around new ideas. Exclusive reliance on nuclear weapons was regarded as dangerously inflexible, and it was argued that the West, with its superior resources in population and wealth (West European economic recovery was strong by then), should have the means to defend itself with conventional forces. Defense Secretary McNamara laid out the argument for a new policy in his speech at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in June 1962, and it began to be formally debated in NATO councils about that time. The concept was first portrayed in a major NATO exercise in 1964. Because of the West Europeans' fears of becoming "decoupled" from the US nuclear umbrella, and of the economic burden of a conventional force buildup, the formal adoption of "flexible response" by NATO was delayed until 1967.

This doctrine as ultimately adopted postulates a conventional war capability at least strong enough to halt an initial Warsaw Pact conventional attack, backed by the threat (and capability) to use nuclear weapons—initially tactical weapons but ultimately strategic systems—if the Pact offensive continued. Conceptually, NATO would attempt, using only conventional forces, to bring about a pause in the Pact offensive as early and as near to the intra-German border as possible. Should this attempt fail, the next NATO move—according to the doctrine—could be limited, selective NATO nuclear strikes to demonstrate the firmness of NATO's resolve and to signal a willingness to further escalate nuclear warfare if necessary. This step would project an implicit readiness to launch nuclear strikes against the USSR with US strategic nuclear weapons.

Revival of Conventional Emphasis

These perceptions were reflected in a new emphasis on organizing and planning sustained conventional theater offensive operations. In a reversal of Khrushchev's cuts of conventional forces, nonnuclear firepower was greatly increased. More artillery, multiple rocket launchers, and infantry mortars were fielded, and development programs for self-propelled artillery got under way.

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Recognizing the vulnerability of pure tank forces going against well-prepared, dug-in infantry equipped with modern antitank weapons, the Soviets reinforced their tank divisions with more mechanized infantry. The infantry itself became more powerful with new families of armored combat vehicles and antiarmor weaponry. [REDACTED]

Soviet concepts for battlefield operations were also evolving to emphasize rapid closure with the NATO defenses and early location and destruction of NATO tactical nuclear weapons and delivery systems. World War II concepts for exploiting breakthroughs of enemy defenses by launching powerful mechanized task forces into the enemy rear to divert and destroy its reserve forces, command and control facilities, and logistics were resurrected and updated under the rubric of the Operational Maneuver Group. In general, these initiatives were described in Soviet writings as measures to restore and maintain tactical mobility on the battlefield using only conventional weapons. The Soviets may also have hoped that, if successful, these tactics might keep NATO so off-balance and outmaneuvered that execution of tactical nuclear strikes would become so difficult, with results so uncertain, that "graduated escalation" would be an unattractive option. [REDACTED]

Offensive tactical air operations were a critical element in this developing scheme. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the bulk of Soviet tactical air forces was committed to air defense because much of NATO's theater nuclear capability was air delivered. By the early 1970s, however, the Soviets were devoting more emphasis to the so-called Air Operation, which envisaged mass conventional air attacks to break through NATO's air defenses and attack and immobilize NATO's airbases and ground-launched nuclear systems. Gaining air superiority over Germany was considered critical to the success of Pact conventional ground operations. Also, because NATO's air forces still provided much of its nuclear delivery capability, a successful air offensive would greatly reduce NATO's capacity to execute the tactical nuclear phase of flexible response. [REDACTED]

The Calculus of Escalation

By the mid-1970s, substantial expansion of their ICBM and SLBM forces had given the Soviets the

capability to attack all military targets in North America, and the subsequent deployment of the SS-18 Mod 4 with its highly accurate warheads gave them at least the theoretical capability to take out a sizable portion of the Minuteman force. The size and survivability of their strategic nuclear forces, along with programs for the survivability of their national leadership and command structure, enabled the Soviets to assert with confidence that their manifest retaliatory capability constituted an effective deterrent to US strategic nuclear power. Indeed, Moscow doubtless saw NATO's revised doctrine of graduated response as proof of the success of the USSR's efforts. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, Soviet authorities continued to attack the concept of limited nuclear war. In both open and classified forums, they asserted that once nuclear weapons are used, even if only on a limited scale in Europe, escalation cannot be controlled and the war will quickly escalate to an all-out nuclear exchange. This line served as a public "declaratory" strategy meant to deter the NATO strategy of "graduated escalation" and "limited nuclear" war. The Soviets recognized that this NATO strategy had been developed because of a growing Western perception of mutual deterrence at the intercontinental level and a consequent erosion of confidence in US willingness to respond immediately with strategic nuclear weapons in the event of a Warsaw Pact conventional attack on Western Europe. In effect, Moscow was attempting to persuade Western public opinion and officials that NATO's new strategy would not work—that any use of nuclear weapons would result in escalation to a nuclear war no one could win. [REDACTED]

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might be inhibited from initiating nuclear strikes to prevent a defeat by massive Pact conventional forces. The Soviet reasoning appears to have been that, faced with a matching "decoupled" response from the Pact, NATO could not achieve a military advantage by resorting to escalation within the theater. And the USSR's large and survivable strategic forces virtually eliminated any prospect of the United States' achieving a military advantage by escalating to strategic strikes on the Soviet homeland. [REDACTED]

The Implications of Nuclear Parity

At about the time that the Soviets were achieving these force levels, their highest political and military leaders increasingly argued in public statements that the forces of the nuclear powers had reached the point where a nuclear war would be suicidal for both sides and that no meaningful victory would be possible. Brezhnev's speech in Tula, in January 1977, appears to have been a benchmark in this new public line, although some Soviet military writers had been advancing similar arguments during the previous decade or so. In his speech Brezhnev asserted that:

The allegations that the Soviet Union is going beyond what is sufficient for defense, that it is striving for superiority in armaments with the aim of delivering "the first strike" are absurd and totally unfounded. . . . The Soviet Union always was and continues to be a convinced opponent of any such concepts. . . . Our approach to these questions can be formulated as follows: The Soviet Union's defense potential must be sufficient to deter anyone from taking a risk to violate our peaceful life. Not a course of superiority in armaments but a course in reducing them, at lessening military confrontation—such is our policy.

The "Tula line" was elaborated on in February 1981 at the 26th Party Congress, where Brezhnev repudiated the concept of victory in nuclear war. With minor variations, this characterization has been consistently followed in public statements since then. [REDACTED]

The buildup of nuclear delivery capabilities in the theater during the 1970s was the culmination of Moscow's efforts to match or overmatch US and NATO capabilities for escalation at the tactical, theater, and intercontinental levels. This development gave Moscow more reason to believe that the West

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This change in the way Soviet leaders publicly portrayed their nuclear policy clearly served their political interests. The preemptive threat posed by the USSR's growing advantages in throw weight and the improving accuracy of its new ICBMs, against the long background of pronouncements by Soviet military and political leaders that the USSR would "win" a global nuclear war, had generated renewed vigor in Western defense programs and cohesiveness within the NATO alliance; it also put the USSR at a disadvantage in Western public opinion.² That this shift in the public line was self-serving, however, does not necessarily mean it did not reflect a real change in the Soviet perspective on nuclear strategy; in fact, not long after the Tula speech and continuing through the 1980s, similar characterizations of nuclear issues began appearing with increasing frequency in authoritative military writings, including some at the classified level. [REDACTED]

The Tula line was not, however, immediately endorsed by the military leadership. As late as 1979, Chief of the General Staff Kulikov contributed an essay to the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* that made the rather labored argument that "the just objectives of the war and the advanced nature of their social and state system . . . will provide the socialist states with objective possibilities for achieving victory." The statement was clearly set in the context of nuclear war, although it is noteworthy that even then it cited sociopolitical factors—rather than military-technical—as the potential sources of "victory." But from 1980 onward both political and military spokesmen and writers, with a few notable exceptions, have espoused the view that nuclear war is unwinnable and would be immensely destructive to all participants. They have disclaimed military superiority as a Soviet objective while vowing not to allow the United States to achieve superiority either. All of the top military leaders—then Minister of Defense Sokolov, Chief of

² One US Soviet specialist has argued that the Tula speech was a specific response to and prompted by public disclosure of the "Team B" report in the US media. While this is a plausible view, we think it more likely that the Team B revelations were but one of a combination of Western public and official treatments of the Soviet "war-fighting, war-winning" approach to strategic force planning that prompted Moscow to seek to alter its public image on this score. [REDACTED]

the General Staff Akhromeyev, Warsaw Pact Commander in Chief Kulikov, and most recently the new Minister of Defense, Dmitriy Yazov, have done so. [REDACTED]

Another indication of evolving views on nuclear war by the Soviet military leadership appeared in a book by Colonel General Gareyev, a deputy chief of the [REDACTED]

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Ogarkov's Demotion

On 6 September 1984 Ogarkov was removed from the post of Chief of the General Staff. The circumstances of his removal—he was given no honors and his new position was not announced—indicated that he had been forced out rather than routinely transferred.

The reasons for Ogarkov's abrupt demotion have never been given, and the explanations offered by various Soviet and East European sources appear to be more in the way of conjecture, or perhaps disinformation, than firsthand knowledge. The fact that it occurred soon after he had expressed in Red Star the belief that a high-technology conventional war with the West was possible raises the possibility that his removal was connected to his continued forceful advocacy of additional resources for defense. Lending credibility to this hypothesis, the lead editorials in Pravda and Red Star on 5 and 6 September, respectively, the eve of Ogarkov's demotion, had emphasized in almost identical terms that social programs could not be cut to increase defense spending.

The resource implications of Ogarkov's arms agenda must have appeared daunting to at least a sizable faction of the Soviet political leadership, including then General Secretary Chernenko, who had publicly rebuffed pressure to expand defense production in the spring of 1984. In pressing for more vigorous preparations for a potential global and protracted conventional war, Ogarkov in effect was calling for accelerated military procurement, and hence an increased share of resources allocated to defense. Moreover, his emphasis on advanced conventional weapons and weapons based on new technologies implied cost increases that would be proportionally greater than

the quantitative growth in fielded systems. The weapons Ogarkov advocated are the very kinds of military systems that compete most directly with civilian machine building for resources, skilled manpower, and scientific and engineering talent.

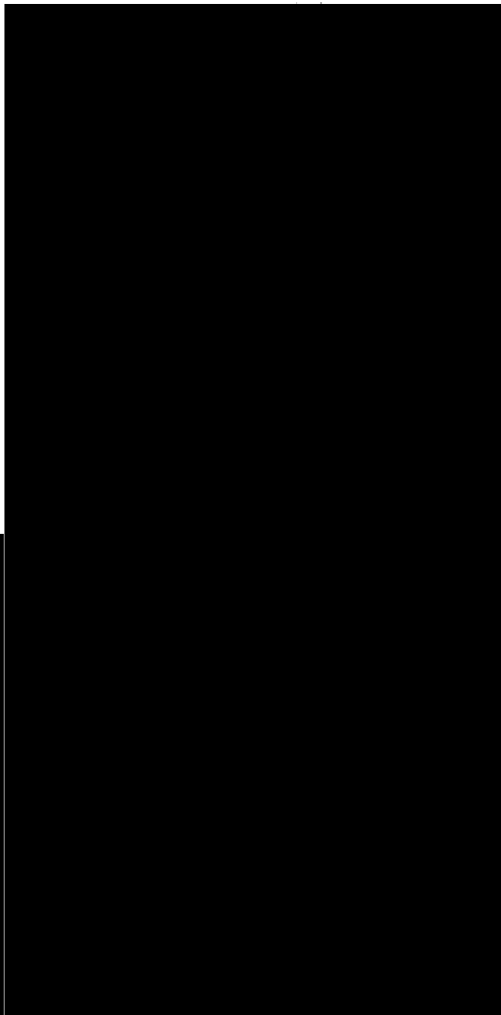
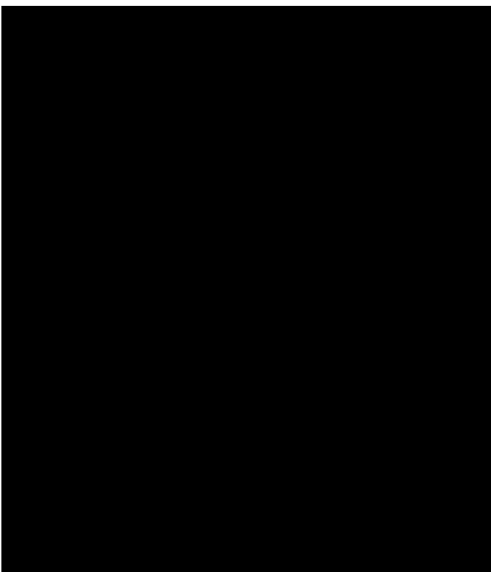
Brezhnev's address to the military high command conference in late October 1982 demonstrated the pressures facing the Soviet leadership. Long a partisan of military interests, Brezhnev offered reassurances that military concerns were being taken seriously and promised, in particular, that priority would be given to defense research and development to ensure that the USSR did not fall behind the West. But at the same time, he implied that the armed forces should not expect any increase in resource allocations above those already planned and needed to do more themselves to guarantee the best use of what was already being provided.

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General Staff who has held key positions at the Voroshilov Military Academy.¹ While ostensibly a review of the contributions to military thought of M. V. Frunze, the book explicitly argued that some of the key tenets of Sokolovskiy's *Military Strategy* were no longer valid:

- Gareyev casts doubt on beliefs from the 1960s that a world war would inevitably be nuclear and that the conventional phase of the war would be brief.
- He emphasizes the catastrophic consequences of the massive employment of nuclear weapons.
- He raises the possibility of greater opportunity for a comparatively long war employing conventional weapons, especially new types of advanced-technology systems.

The theme of the unwinnability of nuclear war and its "catastrophic and irremediable consequences" has also been asserted on several occasions by Akhromeyev and other senior Soviet officers. [REDACTED]



Soviet Nuclear Planning Assumptions

There is a close correlation between public statements on nuclear war by the political and military leadership. [REDACTED]

¹ Col. Gen. M. A. Gareyev, *M. V. Frunze - Military Theorist* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), translated as IPRS-UMA-85-0271.

² November 1985 [REDACTED] (U)

³ M. A. Zhilin, ed., *The History of Military Art* (U)

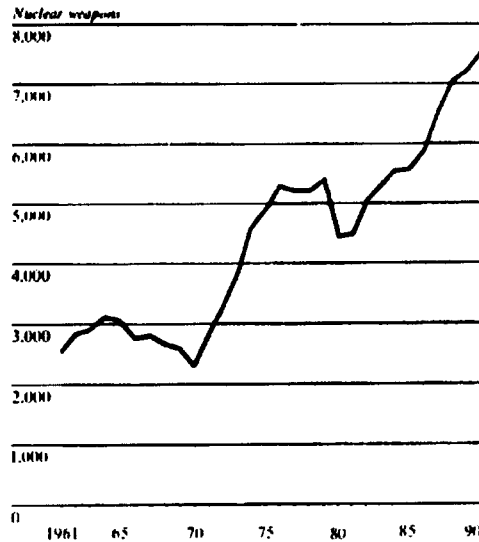
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[REDACTED] In our view, this indicates that the Soviet leadership has come to believe that in an all-out nuclear war with the United States the USSR could not achieve victory in any meaningful way, even if it struck first. Their own assessments seem to have convinced the Soviets that, no matter what form their first strike took, the United States would still retain the means to retaliate massively against the USSR. [REDACTED]

We do not doubt that the Soviets would attempt to preempt if they acquired unambiguous warning that the United States was going to launch a large-scale nuclear attack. But the Soviet military since the early 1960s has recognized that the critical drawback of the preemption option is the extreme difficulty of acquiring strategic warning of a US decision to initiate nuclear war that is sufficiently convincing to persuade the political leadership to approve the irrevocable step of an intercontinental nuclear attack. For this reason, the Soviets believe that launching on tactical warning or while under attack are likely to be the only practical options open to them in the event of nuclear escalation. [REDACTED]

Estimated Soviet View of US Strategic Nuclear Retaliatory Capability



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This evolution in Moscow's outlook on nuclear war is consistent with our estimates of Soviet calculations of US retaliatory capability over the past two decades (see figure). These estimates are based on analysis of Soviet formulas for computing damage to missile silos and likely Soviet assessments of the vulnerability of US SSBNs and bombers to a Soviet first strike. They indicate that Soviet calculations based on such methods would have shown that in the mid-to-late 1960s

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the US capability to retaliate after a Soviet strike, while substantial, was slowly declining. This trend might have encouraged some Soviet leaders to believe that, with their MIRVed hard-target missiles on the drawing boards and programs already under way to develop an ABM system, there was a chance they could eventually field a force that could substantially destroy US nuclear forces in a first strike while effectively defending against a retaliatory response. [REDACTED]

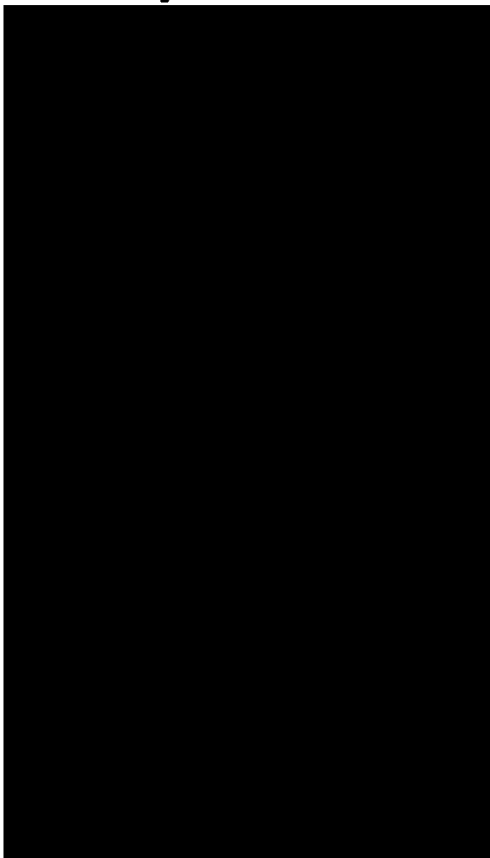
The same methods of calculation, however, would also depict the decline in US retaliatory capability stopping in the late 1960s with the US deployment of MIRVed ICBMs and SLBMs. By the mid-1970s, Soviet political and military leaders may have been forced to confront the fact that, despite more than a decade of unremitting effort, including deployment of their own highly accurate MIRVed ICBMs and an ABM system, the US retaliatory capability had grown. Our own efforts to employ Soviet formulas for such calculations show the US retaliatory capability growing from 2,500 warheads to more than 5,000. While we do not pretend to be able to duplicate precisely the Soviet calculations, we think our use of the formulas does reflect the rough order of magnitude that would have been indicated in the Soviets' own analysis. [REDACTED]

Moreover, US strategic modernization programs then under way—of which the Soviets were fully aware—had the potential to nearly double again US retaliatory capabilities by the end of the 1980s. This prospect probably reinforced the view that the USSR—even with its great throw weight advantages, improved heavy ICBM accuracy, and strategic defense programs—would be incapable of preventing massive retaliation by the United States. Under these circumstances, the prospects of achieving strategic nuclear superiority that could produce a meaningful victory in an all-out war may increasingly have seemed unrealistic. [REDACTED]

At the same time, it is clear from their writings and statements that Soviet leaders believe their massive nuclear buildup of the late 1960s and early 1970s has given them a powerful deterrent to US intercontinental attack. During the 1960s, Soviet offensive forces—which for most of the period consisted of ICBMs

deployed on soft pads and in fixed silos—were themselves vulnerable to a preemptive attack option. By the 1970s, however, the Soviets had deployed enough ICBMs and SLBMs to ensure at least some retaliatory capability against high-priority military targets. And by the 1980s the substantial growth and decreased vulnerability of their nuclear forces provided the Soviets with the capability to ensure that their forces could inflict unacceptable damage on their opponent, even under the most stressing retaliatory circumstances. [REDACTED]

Views on Limiting Nuclear War



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slowed from an average annual rate of 5 percent during 1966-70 to less than half that rate in the late 1970s and 1980s. [REDACTED]

The defense sector was not immune from the effects of this economic slowdown. A combination of manufacturing problems, supply bottlenecks, and, perhaps, policy decisions resulted in a sharp decline in the growth rate of real defense spending. Overall, growth in defense outlays slowed from an average increase of 4 percent per year in the early 1970s to only about 1 to 2 percent per year after 1975. But despite this slowdown in the annual growth of spending, the high absolute level that the military expenditures had reached meant that defense continued to claim a large share of resources—between 15 and 17 percent of GNP—during this period of poor economic performance. [REDACTED]

All of these developments sharply increase the potential advantages that would accrue from the Soviets' conventional military strength in the Eurasian theaters. In our view, this has been a major reason Soviet military leaders over the last several years have vigorously advocated modernizing conventional forces through greater exploitation of new technologies. Soviet perceptions of US and NATO efforts to improve their conventional forces through the incorporation of advanced technology would only add to the sense of urgency on the part of Soviet military planners to devote more attention to advanced-technology conventional weapons. [REDACTED]

Confronting the Economic Burden of Defense¹

While Soviet military leaders grappled with the implications of the standoff in strategic nuclear power, Soviet political leaders were facing worsening economic problems that threatened over time to undermine the Soviet Union's military power and, perhaps, its political stability as well. Soviet GNP growth

There is evidence that Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko all recognized that the large resource demands of the military constrained the political leadership's ability to deal with the flagging economy, but all three failed to confront this problem directly. Indeed, throughout the late 1970s, at a time when the Soviet five-year plan specified low investment for the overall economy, the defense industry benefited from high levels of investment. The policy of sustaining high levels of defense spending despite the economy's poor performance in the late 1970s and early 1980s, combined with severe problems in the agriculture and energy sectors, left few resources for civilian industrial investment. The government's exhortation of workers and factory managers to be efficient could not offset the drag on productivity caused by an increasingly obsolescent stock of plant and equipment. [REDACTED]

The investment strategy adopted by Brezhnev appears to have been intended in good part to sidestep confrontation with the defense constituency on resource issues, but tensions over resource allocation nevertheless mounted in the early 1980s. Even though military expenditures remained high, the armed forces leadership—with Ogarkov at the point—voiced intense concern over the level of the Soviet defense effort at a

¹ The economic and defense investment issues discussed in this section are described in more detail in DI Intelligence Assessment SOV 87-10036X (Secret NF NC OC), July 1987, *Gorbachev: Steering the USSR Into the 1990s*. [REDACTED]

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time of rising US military expenditures and NATO force modernization. As noted earlier, Ogarkov and other Soviet military specialists also expressed concern over the Soviet Union's ability to compete with the West in the deployment of new weapons based on advanced technology. [REDACTED]

Thus, when Gorbachev assumed the position of General Secretary in March 1985, he inherited an economy beset by labor and energy shortages, declining productivity and poor-quality output, and a defense establishment restive after a decade of spending restraint and what it perceived to be both quantitative and qualitative military challenges from the West. Convinced that the Soviet economy was in need of "radical restructuring" to meet the challenges of the modern world in both the civil and military spheres, Gorbachev adopted an ambitious industrial modernization program that reversed the Brezhnev low-investment policy. The keystone of Gorbachev's economic strategy is the renewal of the USSR's stock of plant and equipment by a combination of high rates of investment, especially in civilian machine building, and increased rates of retirement of old plant and equipment. In the near term, however, rapid modernization of the industrial base means that a larger share of the output of the machine-building and metalworking sector—which also produces military hardware—must go to the civilian sector. [REDACTED]

Reasserting Party Control of Military Doctrine

Apparently perceiving that his industrial modernization policy would run head-on into the short-term interest of the defense constituency, which had been calling for the infusion of additional spending, Gorbachev and his allies undertook to reassert party control of military issues. His bold seizure of the opportunity afforded by the "Cessna Incident" to fire Marshal Sokolov—who had shown little enthusiasm for Gorbachev's new formulations on arms control and military policy generally—and impose a relatively junior general as his new defense minister is only the most dramatic example in a series of actions he has taken virtually since his first hours as party boss to shake up

the military.* Gorbachev also moved quickly to reassert the party's authority for formulating military doctrine. The revised party program issued in October 1985, a major theoretical document and the first such revision since the Khrushchev version of 1961, contained a provision—lacking in Khrushchev's version—that stressed the party's role in the formulation of military doctrine. [REDACTED]

A formal reaffirmation of the party's preeminence in doctrinal matters may have been viewed by Gorbachev and his colleagues as a necessary first step in reclaiming some of the authority the Brezhnev leadership had allowed to devolve to the military. Earlier, in the late 1950s, Khrushchev had exerted his political authority to force a reluctant ground-force-dominated military leadership to accept an almost exclusively nuclear-missile-oriented doctrine. This doctrinal construction clearly fit with Khrushchev's broader agenda; large nuclear forces offered the prospects of superpower status for the USSR but were less quantitatively demanding of resources—and therefore impinged less on Khrushchev's economic priorities—than the immense Soviet conventional forces. Under Brezhnev, however, the professional military enjoyed substantially greater authority for defining and evaluating national security requirements, as well as for the formulation of the military component of Soviet doctrine. This was partly a reflection of Brezhnev's longstanding ties to the senior Soviet military hierarchy, dating back to World War II and extending through his long tenure as party secretary for defense industries. It was also, at least indirectly, an outgrowth of his political management strategy. Whereas Khrushchev had run roughshod over vested institutional concerns to impose his own ideas and programs—ultimately promoting his own political downfall—Brezhnev sought to disperse and circumscribe the political power of the major state and party institutions by allowing each a substantial amount of

* These actions are described in detail in DI Intelligence Assessment SOV #7-10061X (Secret NF NC OC), October 1987, *Gorbachev and the Military: Managing National Security Policy*. [REDACTED]

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The Khrushchev Cuts

While Khrushchev probably was convinced of the substantive correctness of his almost exclusively nuclear-oriented doctrine, it also provided a useful rationale for resource decisions consistent with his economic schemes. Between 1955 and 1959, Soviet general purpose forces were drastically reduced and there was an overall reduction in defense spending as well. According to a January 1960 statement by Khrushchev, overall military manpower had been reduced "in the past four years" by 2.14 million men and totaled 3.6 million. He announced on that occasion that a proposal had been submitted to cut manpower by another 1.2 million men by the end of 1961, but we believe only about half of this reduction actually took place. Much of the sizable savings in personnel costs went to other military programs—mainly new, more expensive weapon systems and equipment to fulfill Khrushchev's scheme for strategic nuclear power—but we estimate there was some decline in total defense spending, and the demand for quantity of resources was reduced significantly.

Such drastic reductions in the ground and air forces must have been traumatic for the Soviet professional military officers. While the military as an institution was not a principal player in the Khrushchev ouster, it did facilitate the actions of Khrushchev's political opponents, and one of the charges Khrushchev's political adversaries levied against him was failure to provide adequately for the military security of the USSR.

control over its nominal area of responsibility. Under this "feudalization" of authority the professional military was able to take a leading role in military doctrinal matters.

¹ This Brezhnevian political agenda had other, far-reaching results: the entrenched central and regional bureaucratic and party apparatuses constitute perhaps the most severe roadblocks to Gorbachev's efforts at *perestroika*.

The Debate on "Sufficiency"

One of Gorbachev's early moves to impose his version of doctrine for national security occurred at the party congress in February 1986—a few months after the new party program had appeared—when he revived the concept of "reasonable sufficiency" for defense. The congress's final resolution endorsed his call to "restrict military potential within the bounds of reasonable sufficiency." A year later he began to push the concept in public speeches. It was given additional formal status—clearly at Gorbachev's instigation—in a May 1987 declaration by the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee (PCC). The concept has since become the major theme of the party line on military security. The commentary on the subject since then, however, indicates that the meaning and implications of the concept are far from settled.

The term *military sufficiency* has in fact been used as far back as the 1960s to characterize the "benign" nature of Soviet security objectives. Despite Brezhnev's Tula speech in 1977, it has never been embraced by the military or formalized in party or military doctrine. As noted earlier, we think that at least one of Brezhnev's purposes at the time was to counter public charges in the West that Moscow was striving for strategic nuclear superiority and that its forces were designed not for deterrence but to be able to fight and "win" a global nuclear war.

The present Soviet discourse on this issue, however, goes beyond mere public propaganda in our view, although propaganda still figures heavily in the public portrayals of the concept. The continuing debate on the meaning of the term indicates that both civilian and military officials consider its meaning to have critical policy ramifications. In contrast to the past use of the term as a rhetorical device for portraying "traditional" Soviet policy, some participants in the present debate have explicitly characterized "reasonable sufficiency" as a guideline for changing the USSR's approach to military security, in ways that

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the defense constituency evidently sees as potentially threatening its interests. Soviet civilian academicians argue that the goal of securing the USSR from the danger of military attack does not require matching or exceeding the quantity and quality of all aspects of the military forces of potential adversaries. They have expanded the definition of security to give greater consideration to political—as opposed to purely military—factors in preventing a war. The military hierarchy, on the other hand, is seeking to define sufficiency in narrower, more traditional terms of "military parity," a condition that, presumably, the military would be left to calibrate. [REDACTED]

An example of the views of those espousing an expanded concept of sufficiency is the comments of Yevgeniy Primakov,⁴ director of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, on the PCC declaration:

First, I would like to talk about reasonable sufficiency. . . . The issue is having sufficient means for reliable defense to guarantee reliable security of the country. Sufficient means, no more. By the way, I think this deprives those who want to tire us out economically in the arms race of many possibilities.

Unfortunately, or perhaps not, for a long time we followed the United States in almost mirror-image fashion perhaps necessary at that stage. We played the game, with the United States making the rules, and we were catching up with them in many areas of the arms race. That is now being stopped by securing sufficiency of defense. [REDACTED]

While arguing that sufficiency was not intended as a substitute for the concept of parity, Primakov offered a redefinition of parity. Parity, he said, remains imperative as long as nuclear weapons exist, but at the same time he stressed that under the doctrine of sufficiency, parity has both a quantitative—numerical—and a qualitative component. By defining

the latter as the ability to inflict "unacceptable damage" on an aggressor in response to a nuclear first strike, Primakov appeared to contend that the Soviet Union need not match US forces to maintain an adequate defense posture. [REDACTED]

Defense Minister Yazov's commentary on the Warsaw Pact declaration also endorsed the military sufficiency line, but defined it in a more restricted sense. In an article in *Pravda* on 27 July, Yazov appeared to defend the traditional military view that Soviet strategic forces cannot remain static but must continue to grow in proportion to the size of opposing forces. He asserted that the Soviet Union "closely follows" military developments in the United States and NATO, "correctly assesses the dangerous trends as they appear," and takes steps to "ensure that our defense potential develops correspondingly." He added that "we are not the ones who set the limits of sufficiency; it is the actions of the United States and NATO." [REDACTED]

Two recent articles by members of the Institute of the USA and Canada (Vitaliy V. Zhurkin, Sergey A. Karaganov, and Andrey V. Kortunov) contain the most comprehensive and detailed argument so far available for defining reasonable sufficiency in terms other than military parity. The first of these articles⁵ states that the concept is:

intended to break up the closed logic of the arms race, to overcome the speculative scholastic nature of many contemporary military doctrines and concepts, and to place the discussion of military problems in a broad political, economic, and social context. . . . The problem of defending states' security has outgrown the traditional framework of purely military efforts. Security is ensured only by a state strategy that rationally combines political, military, economic, ideological, humanitarian, and other aspects. . . . The predominant role in this complex is played by politics, since it alone ensures

⁴ *USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology* No. 12, December 1987 [REDACTED]

⁵ *FBIS Trends*, 10 June 1987. Primakov made these statements in a television interview and made many of the same points in a 9 July 1987 *Pravda* article. [REDACTED]

the possibility of developing an integrated response to the threats to state security . . . the concept demands that state leaders show a readiness to take their opponents' interests into account and to make mutual concessions and compromises.

Reasonable sufficiency . . . presupposes that in order to prevent aggression on the part of the other side, it is necessary not so much to balance its forces as to restrain its leaders from unleashing a war. In other words, the reasonable approach presupposes not so much an assessment of a potential adversary's hypothetical potential, but also the dialectical analysis and consideration of his real intentions and, most important, interests.

This approach to security is said to envisage purely defensive military doctrines, strategies, and force structures, especially in Europe, and a consequent reduction of the fear of surprise attack.

Another article by the same three authors, appearing in the party's main theoretical journal, *Kommunist*, one month later, argues not only that nuclear war has become unthinkable but also that "on a European continent saturated with nuclear power stations, chemical plants, and enormous fuel dumps, even a nonnuclear war would result in the death of all civilization there." The authors offer this to support their contention that, regarding the possibilities of a repeat of "the 1941 pattern of aggression . . . there is no conflict in East-West relations today which could give rise to resort to war as a solution." They go on to conclude that "the threat of war in Europe," while not entirely eliminated, is "qualitatively different" from what it was after World War II and that "the qualitatively different nature of this threat presupposes a qualitatively different reaction to this threat":

In the past, the level of sufficiency of the USSR's military power in the European theater was determined by the requirement to repulse any aggression and rout any possible coalition of hostile states. Now the task is fundamentally different: to hold back, to prevent a war per se. This task, for its part, requires a reinterpretation of many traditional postulates of military

strategy and operational art, beginning with a reassessment of requirements in numbers of certain types of weapons (for instance, tanks), the nature of maneuvers, and so on.

The rationale for unilateral cuts that is conveyed in the Zhurkin articles appears to have been particularly unpalatable to the professional military, which no doubt see such arguments as leading to dangerous, one-sided concessions by the USSR. Recent articles by senior Soviet military officials, while still paying lipservice to Gorbachev's "new thinking," have sought to rebut the arguments of the civilians:

- A December article by Akhromeyev asserts in the traditional polemical style that the Warsaw Pact's military doctrine—both at the political and operational levels—is strictly defensive, whereas NATO's doctrine is aggressive.¹ While briefly alluding to military sufficiency, Akhromeyev emphatically argues for military parity and strongly rejects unilateral disarmament or reduced defense efforts.
- The same line emerges from Yazov's 8 February *Pravda* article. In it, the Soviet Defense Minister argues at great length—aided by several tables showing numbers and types of weapon systems on both sides—that a "comprehensive" assessment of the military balance between the superpowers shows it to be at "equilibrium," albeit with certain "individual disproportions that objectively exist on both sides." Yazov asserts that the objective of arms control should be to preserve the equilibrium, and he winds up his piece with a statement that is almost identical to the one cited above in his commentary on the 1987 Warsaw Pact Declaration: "The limits of sufficiency are determined by the actions of the United States and NATO, too."
- Air Defense Commander in Chief Tretyak, in a 17 February *Moscow News* interview, stipulated that *perestroika* for the armed forces was "an objective necessity," but asserted that "any changes in the

¹ *Problems of Peace and Socialism* No. 12, Moscow, December 1987.

army have to be weighed a thousand times." He characterized the reductions under Khrushchev as hasty ... a colossal blow to our defense potential."

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There are, nonetheless, signs that the promulgation of the forward-leaning arguments of the academicians has at least some high-level backing within the party, even if only as a device for creating a broader tableau from which to develop a policy agenda. The appearance of a version of the Zhurkin-Karaganov-Kortunov article in January's *Kommunist* could not have occurred without the support—if not the initiative—of some influential party official. And several of the academicians who have been most prominent in publicly articulating the "new thinking" have been named to head new institutional bodies dealing with foreign policy, security issues, and arms control."

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"Defensive" Defense

Under the general rubric of "sufficiency," various Soviets and East Europeans have expounded on the principle of "defensive defense." Most characterizations of this concept roughly parallel Gorbachev's 17

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September 1987 *Pravda* statement that "military sufficiency assumes such a structure of the armed forces of a state that would be sufficient to repulse possible aggression but insufficient to conduct offensive operations." Zhurkin et al. argue that the objective is to create a political and military situation—first of all in Europe—in which neither side would fear a surprise attack.

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Kokoshin has been one of the more active expounders of the concept that defense of the USSR does not require a massive capability for offensive operations. He has argued that, because defense requires less than parity of forces, Soviet policymakers should seek to obtain forces that are "reasonably sufficient" rather than forces equal to the adversary's offensive capability. Kokoshin has described strategic stability as the absence of conditions necessary for a surprise attack. In one article, he cites the standoff in nuclear firepower and the technological advances in nonnuclear weaponry to question the viability of offensive operations on the battlefield of the future. He argues that military-strategic calculus dictates the creation of forces equipped and structured for defensive operations, and that this would also enhance stability. In an earlier article with V. Larionov, a professor at the Voroshilov Military Academy, Kokoshin even went so far as to portray the 1943 battle of Kursk as an example of the defensive doctrine in application.¹² (An interesting bit of reinterpretation, considering that the battle of Kursk was defensive only at the outset and was conceived all along by the Soviets as a massive counteroffensive.)

[REDACTED]

A number of civilian informants have suggested that these concepts are under active study or are even now being implemented, and that they will lead to major changes in the organization, size, and disposition of Warsaw Pact forces and in the strategy for their employment. So far, however, most of the public discussion of the so-called defensive doctrine appears

¹² A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov, "The Battle of Kursk in Light of Today's Defensive Doctrine," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 8, 1987.

[REDACTED]

aimed at influencing Western—particularly European—opinion. Soviet and East European spokesmen began publicizing the concept most prominently in the months following the Reykjavik summit, when the prospect of elimination of INF weapons prompted widespread European commentary on the numerical superiority of the standing Warsaw Pact forces in Central Europe, and especially on the offensive orientation manifest in Pact doctrine and exercises and in the massive armored composition of the Pact forces. To some extent, the Soviets appear to be playing back to receptive West European ears ideas that have originated in Western Europe in recent years—mainly in West Germany but also in some Scandinavian circles—advocating restructuring of NATO defenses along static, defensive lines and minimizing mobile, mechanized forces. Kokoshin, in fact, cites a number of these Western ideas in his January article. [REDACTED]

The May 1987 PCC declaration contained an appeal for direct consultations between the Warsaw Pact and NATO on the military doctrines of the two alliances, suggesting that such discussions could lead to reduction of mutual distrust and also to force reductions. This is only one of a number of recent proposals by the Pact for direct exchanges with NATO on military subjects. At least in part, these initiatives have the obvious purpose of publicly contrasting the purportedly defensive and nonthreatening nature of Pact military doctrine with the allegedly aggressive Western doctrines. Such arguments may have some impact on segments of the Western public. In particular, doctrinally based arguments can be used to push "no first use" proposals and to criticize NATO's flexible response policy and forward defense strategy. [REDACTED]

Not surprisingly, most Soviet military sources have been particularly skeptical about defensive defense, professing not to understand how "defensive" military forces would differ from "offensive" ones. Both Akhromeyev and Tretyak have asserted that, while defense can prevent the enemy from defeating the USSR, it does not defeat the enemy. Tretyak's articulation in his 17 February *Moscow News* interview was unambiguous:

But in defending oneself one will not finally rout the enemy. Therefore, the troops must master the art of the offensive. This is a point of

our doctrine which is especially distorted in the West. [REDACTED]

Implications and Outlook

It seems unlikely that any serious reexamination of Soviet doctrine has yet reached a stage where significant changes in forces or strategy are imminent. Such major changes normally take years to work their way from concept to implementation in the ponderous Soviet military system. The 1987 edition of *Tactics*, one of the basic Soviet military texts on theater combat, shows little change from the 1984 edition. [REDACTED]

This is not surprising, however, because at its most fundamental level the debate on "reasonable sufficiency" and "defensive defense" is really over "how much is enough." It derives much of its impetus from the need to manage defense requirements under conditions of increasing economic stringency, and its outcome ultimately will be determined by the policy agenda and political power of the party leadership rather than by resolution of doctrinal discourse. [REDACTED]

Most discussants of the issue have consistently described reasonable sufficiency of strategic nuclear forces as the ability to deliver a devastating response no matter what kind of first strike is launched by the enemy. There are, nonetheless, differences in views over how this formula translates into specific force requirements. Zhurkin, Kokoshin, and others have put forth a formula for "functional parity"—asserting that parity in capabilities does not necessarily require parity in numbers or types of systems. Gorbachev himself, in his speech to Foreign Ministry officials in May 1986, argued that it was desirable to worry less about numerical parity because the USSR already had enough nuclear weapons to carry out a retaliatory strike. Yazov and the other military writers, on the other hand, have argued for numerical parity, while acknowledging that overall numerical parity allows for different numbers of specific types of weapons to be held by each side. [REDACTED]

These differences notwithstanding, the generally convergent trend in views of strategic nuclear sufficiency, coupled with the stringent resource situation, has enabled the Soviet defense constituency to support, albeit warily, Gorbachev's strategic nuclear arms control agenda. Even the more rigorous interpreters of nuclear sufficiency acknowledge that it can be achieved at lower force levels on both sides as long as parity is maintained through mutual and symmetrical reductions. And mutual reductions of strategic nuclear forces are a means of freeing up some resources, even if only at the margin, for other military needs. At a staged public hearing ostensibly in connection with the Supreme Soviet's putative "ratification" of the INF treaty, Yazov emphasized that implementation of the INF reductions would not result in a net reduction of military strength, but rather that the men and material freed up by elimination of INF forces would be used elsewhere in the Soviet military forces—again rejecting the idea of unilateral cutbacks in total military strength. [REDACTED]

The discussions of a "defensive" doctrine, for all of their obvious propagandistic aims, also appear to reflect tentative exploration of alternative strategies and force posture that might offer some avenue of relief from the basic problem of resources versus requirements. Even some Soviet military writings disparaging the so-called defensive defense acknowledge that a defensive posture might permit a certain level of resource savings. Military spokesmen such as Yazov, Gareyev, and First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Gribkov emphasize, however, that a defensive posture includes preparedness for vigorous—and decisive—counteroffensive operations following the initial repulse of enemy aggression. [REDACTED]

The impact of Gorbachev's doctrinal innovations—should they occur—will be seen in the number of forces procured and deployed in the 1990s and in the type and characteristics of weapons that will approach initial operational capability in the late 1990s. The Soviets are now in the process of identifying their military-strategic goals for the period through 2005 and the measures to be undertaken during the 13th Five-Year Plan (1991-95) in support of those goals. New political-military concepts embodied in Soviet military doctrine under Gorbachev will be important as defense planners seek to match requirements to means during the 13th Five-Year Plan period. [REDACTED]

The High-Technology Threat and Resistance to Defense Costs

Despite the major gains in security that the Soviets have achieved through their military buildup, the accelerated US military programs and renewed confidence of the West in the Reagan years have reminded Moscow that its gains could easily be transitory. US programs to increase the accuracy and survivability of strategic offensive forces—Peacekeeper, Minuteman III A, Trident D-5, and Pershing II, for example—are cited by Soviet authorities as threatening the nuclear balance. Although the intensity of the Soviets' earlier alarm over SDI seems to have moderated somewhat as they have gained a clearer appreciation of the

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technical and political obstacles to deployment of an effective system, they remain concerned that:

- Even a partially effective SDI has the potential to change the strategic balance to the Soviets' serious disadvantage.
- Matching a vigorous US SDI program promises to severely strain Soviet economic and technological capacities.
- Overcoming SDI through the fielding of many more nuclear warheads and decoys, although possibly a promising approach, would still add unwelcome costs to the Soviet defense budget.
- Regardless of the ultimate success or failure of SDI as an ABM system, the program may produce spinoffs that could lead to other threatening US advances in space-based or ground-launched weapon systems. [REDACTED]

The Soviets also see emerging threats to their conventional force advantages in Europe. Ogarkov and other military authorities continue to argue that technological advances may revolutionize the nature of conventional war, asserting that high technology is producing new weapons of much greater range, precision, and lethality, which in some cases are said to approach low-yield nuclear weapons in their effects. Although many of the threats cited by the Soviets are far from being realized as fielded NATO weapon systems, Moscow's respect for Western technology and abiding concern with technological surprise oblige it to take such threats seriously. [REDACTED]

Some of the Soviet concerns center on NATO's efforts to isolate the European battlefield from the critically important potential of the Warsaw Pact's reinforcement capability. Without substantial, early reinforcement by mobilized forces from Poland and the USSR, the Soviets fear that NATO might achieve a dangerous buildup advantage that would carry a war into Pact territory. According to Maj. Gen. A. Slobodyenko, writing in *Foreign Military Review* in 1984, the United States believes it is possible "to attack not just the enemy first-echelon formations and units, but simultaneously to strike the second echelons

and reserves, i.e., the full operational depth of his forces." Such a concept threatens both of the major advantages the Soviets hold over NATO: massive reserves and strategic depth that would allow them to form and maneuver reinforcements to advantageous positions along the front. According to Slobodyenko, the general concept of "deep attack" was adopted by NATO as "Combat With Enemy Second Echelons," or the "Rogers Plan," after former SACEUR Gen. Bernard Rogers:

The essence of the Rogers Plan lies in attacking second-echelon forces of the Warsaw Pact at the very beginning of military activities and in preventing their arrival in the battle zone. "The goal of attacking enemy second-echelon forces," Rogers declared, "is to prevent or limit their participation in the combat actions at the front line." [REDACTED]

The hardware requirements of the USSR's conventional and strategic forces are so vast—50,000 tanks and 10,000 combat aircraft, for example—that, despite the large quantities built each year and the advanced quality of the later models, the Soviets are in a constant race with obsolescence. At the same time, the growing complexity and cost of the new models mean that fewer can be built without increasing the resources going into military production. [REDACTED]

Because so much of the Soviets' superpower status rests on military strength, the military and their supporters in the leadership will be reluctant to slacken the defense effort appreciably. Indeed, the challenge of the much-touted Western thrust forward into military high technology argues for allocating even more resources to the military. But to pour more resources into defense now would run head-on into Gorbachev's top-priority economic and industrial programs. [REDACTED]

There is some evidence that Gorbachev and the military (and their supporters in the leadership) have worked out a temporary accommodation to get

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around this dilemma. Although the evidence is tenuous, it suggests an understanding in which:

- Gorbachev has acknowledged that the military, especially general purpose forces, will need more modernization to meet the threats of the late 1990s and beyond, but has argued that unless the industrial plant is modernized first it cannot happen.
- At least some in the military have acknowledged that, without a modernized industry, military capabilities will suffer, and they apparently are willing to live with the (presumably temporary) constraints on military spending that Gorbachev is pressing.
- In the meantime, Gorbachev reportedly has asserted, the military can help themselves by shrinking some of the waste and fat out of their own programs.
- Finally, the military have evidently acquiesced in Gorbachev's attempts to gain some "breathing space" for his programs by avoiding some future military costs through selected arms control arrangements.

The fact that military spending—even though constrained—is evidently still being maintained at a level that ensures a continuing massive input of new weapons into the Soviet armed forces should keep resistance from the defense constituency in check as long as the military does not sense a serious deterioration on the Soviet side of the military balance.

For the future, if Gorbachev's gamble pays off, everyone wins. If it fails, he could lose the defense establishment support at what is likely to be a time of great political vulnerability for his leadership. This line of reasoning suggests that the most likely outcome for the next few years is a prolongation of the present trends: a continued high but flat or slowly growing rate of spending on military procurement, and an overall growth rate in defense spending rising slowly along with any increase in GNP.

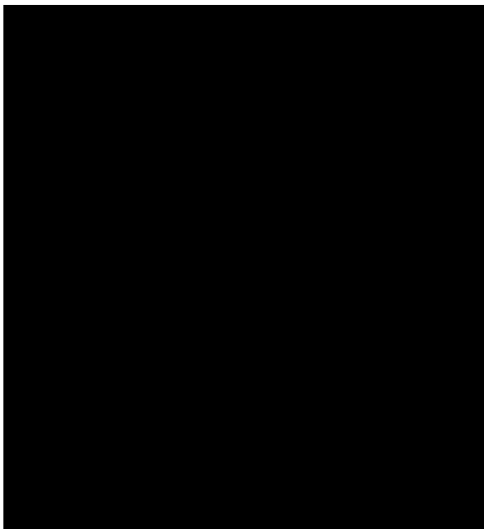
Pressure for Reducing the Defense Burden

Viewed in terms of the needs of the industrial modernization program, however, the most desirable

course of action would be a substantial reduction in military spending. The defense industry is a major producer of capital equipment that usually goes to modernize weapons production plants, and there is a massive backlog in civilian orders for such equipment—in particular, computers and computer numerically controlled machine tools—because of production shortfalls in civilian plants. The civil modernization program also could profit from a substantial diversion of the defense industry's R&D expertise, highest quality material resources, industrial labor, and management talent. The leadership has publicly called on defense industry support for civil modernization since June 1986 and, over the past six months, has upped the ante substantially. Gorbachev initially called on the defense industry to increase production of consumer durables and capital equipment and to provide technical expertise, but now—for the first time—the defense industry not only has been pressed to increase equipment deliveries but also has been given formal responsibility for many of the civilian factories that produce such equipment and are thus now responsible for fulfilling the civilian output goals called for in the new economic plans.

The doctrine of sufficiency appears designed to provide a theoretical justification for shifting resources away from the defense sector. Primakov acknowledged that many of the principles in the PCC declaration are not new but stressed that because they have now been "linked to military doctrine" they will serve as a "basis for practical military construction and preparations" and are "being embodied in practical deeds." According to *Pravda* on 27 May 1987, Gorbachev suggested in Bucharest on the eve of the PCC meeting that the Soviet leadership intends to shift resources from the defense sector, saying that postwar efforts to "create heavy industry, strengthen defense, and achieve military parity" with the United States had created increasing "unevenness" in the economy and called for restoration of economic balance.

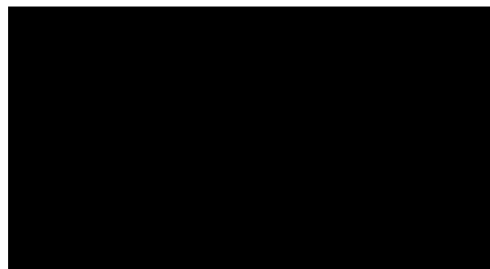
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An objective review of the Soviet military establishment would surely raise a number of questions about its rationality in relation to the USSR's reasonable security requirements. Gorbachev might, for example, question why the USSR needs a 220-division, 2.3-million-man peacetime ground force if—as both NATO and Warsaw Pact authorities appear to agree—neither side is likely to start a war. He might conclude that the Soviet army is better suited to refighting World War II than to meeting more likely present-day contingencies and that, despite (or, more likely, because of) its great size, it is generally in a low state of combat readiness with much of its vast store of equipment in a perpetual state of obsolescence. Specifically, he might question whether 50 Soviet divisions are an appropriate force to garrison the border with China. They are too few to sustain an offensive war against China but appear to be more than is needed to guard against incursions by a Chinese force that is postured for defense in depth and has only modest offensive capabilities. Also, he might conclude that some of the 30 divisions in Central Europe could be withdrawn, given that his current policy seems to be to encourage “new thinking” and “restructuring” by the East European regimes rather than to impose Brezhnevian orthodoxy by military force. [REDACTED]

The 625,000-man air defense forces also appear ripe for Gorbachev's scrutiny. They are among the leading consumers of scarce high technology, yet they have repeatedly shown themselves to have a doubtful capacity to perform their mission of preventing air attacks on the Soviet Union. They have already been subjected to scathing criticism in the wake of the Cessna incident. Gorbachev might also question the strategic assumptions behind the Soviet Navy's program to develop a force of large aircraft carriers. It could prove difficult to demonstrate that such a force would contribute greatly to the vital security needs of a USSR allegedly concerned with defending its massive Eurasian territory. The debacle in Afghanistan may, in fact, prompt some Soviet leaders to question whether the USSR has gotten its money's worth out of a military that was supposed to be a means of projecting Soviet politico-strategic power. Finally, Gorbachev could point to some of the large paramilitary forces such as the 800,000 military construction troops and the 250,000 transport troops, most of whom are low-skilled conscripts considered unsuitable for the regular forces, and question whether they represent the most cost-effective solution to Soviet construction and transportation needs. [REDACTED]

It appears unlikely that these issues involving the future size and modernization rate of the Soviet armed forces have been resolved yet. The differing emphasis between the Gorbachev line on military sufficiency and the statements by the defense constituency suggests that they are still being debated, probably in the context of negotiating the parameters of the next five-year plan. [REDACTED]



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[REDACTED]

Gorbachev probably will continue to seek restraints, and outright cuts, in defense spending through negotiations, at least until he has tested the policies of the next US administration. This is the easiest way to avoid conflict with the Soviet military lobby. If, by that time, he has not achieved significant agreements, and if his economic program still requires additional resources that could be diverted from defense programs, he may well try to impose unilateral cuts.

[REDACTED]

The poor results from Gorbachev's efforts so far to launch economic revitalization suggest that there is, we think, a good chance he will be forced to adopt this course. Although GNP growth for 1986 showed some improvement, much of this was a result of good luck on weather and some benefits from the so-called human factor campaigns to boost productivity. In 1987, familiar problems with poor weather and transportation bottlenecks, compounded by the introduction of economic reforms, resulted in GNP growth of less than 1 percent. Industrial output grew by only about 1.5 percent, and output in the critical civilian machine-building sector—the linchpin of Gorbachev's plan for launching sustained economic growth—did not grow at all. In addition, prospects for improved productivity in the work force are being undercut by the fact that a worker population that has been forced to confront reduced job security and widespread fear of increases in consumer prices has seen no easing of the chronic shortages of consumer goods. Under these circumstances, we believe that if, as seems likely, the leadership continues to pursue its high-investment strategy for stimulating economic growth and—as now seems evident—provides some increase in consumer goods, it will have to tap resources from one or more of the following:

- *Other sectors of the economy.* Energy and agriculture, which together take about half of Soviet investment annually, are prime candidates, although

the disruption in output that would result from major reductions in these sectors would have a ripple effect across the economy.

- *Abroad.* Increasing imports, especially in selected areas such as energy and machine tools, is an attractive option, but it will require Gorbachev to relax his insistence that machinery for modernization must come from domestic production. More to the point, a sizable increase in Soviet imports can ease problems in certain areas but cannot by itself affect the major weaknesses of the USSR's antiquated industrial base.
- *Defense,* which accounts for 15 to 17 percent of GNP—including a large share of the output of the critical machine-building sector and large shares of the highest quality materials.

In sum, while resistance to defense cuts will be formidable, the already large incentives for doing so are growing. [REDACTED]

The least likely outcome for the next few years would be a sharp increase in military spending. It would mean that the economic revitalization program that has been the centerpiece of Gorbachev's entire tenure has been abandoned. This would only come about, we think, if US-Soviet relations deteriorated with a sharply accelerated US defense effort, perhaps including substantial early progress on SDI and other high-tech programs. Under these circumstances, the Soviets would commit whatever additional resources they thought necessary to maintain their military position, even at the expense of slowing Gorbachev's economic initiatives. [REDACTED]